

This book is for you if:

- ✧ You have looked up at a starry night sky and wondered.
- ✧ You went back inside, but still wondered.
- ✧ You've begun to ponder because of the wonder.
- ✧ You're really not sure when it all began.
- ✧ And you're just as uncertain when it will end.
- ✧ Then you go negative.
- ✧ You don't care when it all began or when it ends.
- ✧ After all, you weren't around when all those stars began to pierce the dark.
- ✧ And you won't be around when our sun becomes a supernova visible on someone else's Hubble.
- ✧ But.
- ✧ You really *do* care when it ends.
- ✧ Because like it or not you are part of it all.
- ✧ And so are your friends.
- ✧ Maybe you've noticed ...
- ✧ Some of your friends are going back to church and you're wondering whether you should...
- ✧ Some of your friends know their pastor's names.
- ✧ You recently found yourself looking for the family Bible.
- ✧ Then you realized it went for 75¢ in a garage sale.

- ❖ Lately you've noticed those black-and-white "God" billboards.
- ❖ And that makes you wonder whether George Burns offended God.
- ❖ And that's when you begin to wonder whether you've offended God.
- ❖ And you conclude you haven't offended Him.
- ❖ All you've really done is ignore Him.
- ❖ And then you realize how ticked-off you get when someone ignores you.
- ❖ And then you begin to think about eternity.
- ❖ And then you begin to think...
- ❖ Maybe this book *is* for you.

Curriculum Vitae

This is the page where you the reader find what the author wants you to know about himself. Typically you'll see *Ph.D., Dissertation*, a list of *books and articles published* and a list of *memberships in professional organizations*. Some of which they've actually attended within the past fifteen years. All this so you'll know you really ought to read what they have to say. I don't mean to belittle anyone here. If they walk the walk of what they talk and talk, fine. They might be worth attending to. Some are.

But, I, too, have *Curriculum Vitae*. And here *they* are (notice the plural):

- ✧ grocery clerk (long before items were "scanned")
- ✧ chicken farm ranch hand (or was that chicken ranch farm hand?)
- ✧ filling station attendant (when window washing and a check of the oil was standard service)
- ✧ gold mine dynamiter's assistant
- ✧ gold ore crusher operator
- ✧ backwoods firewood splitter
- ✧ rattlesnake exterminator (self defense only)
- ✧ telephone solicitor (lasted only one day, detested it)
- ✧ UPS route driver
- ✧ typist for an Italian attorney (when keyboards were mechanical not electrical, and there was no spell-check)

- ✧ Air Force Morse radio operator
- ✧ sports writer, sports editor, news writer, newspaper editor
- ✧ Air Force historian (real books, some classified)
- ✧ public affairs officer, USAF (24-year USAF career)
- ✧ college instructor, English and Journalism
- ✧ assistant professor teaching international officers
- ✧ teacher, 9th grade English and middle school German, 19 years
- ✧ husband, father, grandfather ... whoa!
- ✧ resident of California, Colorado, Montana, upstate New York, downstate Texas, Nebraska, Indiana, and a few other places such as Italy, Germany (both sides of the Iron Curtain), Libya (before Kaddafi), Egypt, Greenland, and oh my, the memory fades.
- ✧ All right! I'll fess up. Yes, I've also garnered one bachelor's degree in English, another in German, a master of science in radio-television, and state teaching certification for English, German, and Journalism, all at the secondary level.
- ✧ And, no. I do not have a Ph.D. I needed some time in there for rattlesnake exterminating, firewood splitting, and those pesky little wads for the dynamiting.

Caution!

Reading this book could be hazardous to
your comfort zone.

Additional Caution!

Some readers might consider this book politically incorrect. They'll take offense at my occasional tone of joculariry. They'll confuse this lightness of heart for irreverence. They're missing an important detail. If Jesus was human (He was), and if He wept (He did), then He also laughed.

As for me,
I'm beginning at the end to "get it."
I'm beginning at the end.
I'm beginning.

Forethought

I can't say
from here to eternity
because here *is* eternity.
Besides, that's already taken.
It's a movie. Probably also a book.
Anyway, if we *are* here,
We're already there.
How?
Because eternity has no beginning
and no end.
It simply is,
and if it *is*,
and if we *are*,
then we're there already!
That's odd.
If we are there now,
and now is part of eternity,
then we were there *then*
because *then* is also part of eternity.
Oh dear, where is this line of reasoning going?
This could get complicated.
Or simple.
Wait a minute.
Look, if we are here
and already there,
why are we here when we could be there?
I'll have to think about it.
Why *are* we here?
Why are *we* here?
Why are we *here*?

Another Forethought

Look, I've got some bad news for Thomas Jefferson
and for the whole constitution drafting team.
We are not all created equal; we are all created.
We all have three gifts
given to us by our creator.
Life, liberty, intellect.
Back to Jefferson. Surely he knew....
Some of us are rounder, narrower, heavier, lighter,
brighter, duller....
You can keep the list going.
Go ahead. Do it.
It's part of what this book is about.
Eventually you might get
to Mother Theresa.
She was short.
Wouldn't stand out in a crowd.
But she did.
So, let's get back to that third gift. Intellect.
If we all have it,
but some have more of it than others,
or seem to,
maybe it's like muscles.
We have to exercise.
But how do we exercise intellect to make it bigger?
Think real hard.
You'll find the answer.
Aha! That's it!
Think.
On to the contents of this book.
Or, rather, the rest of the contents.
Because now we know what this book is about.
It's about eternity and thinking.

A Final Forethought

We did this sort of thing,
you and I.
Until the sixth grade.
Or maybe seventh.
And then we stopped.
Thinking.
Why?
Distractions.
The *real world* took over.
Curiosity vaporized.
We stopped wondering
how it could be
that if God is omnipresent
then He is here.
Now.
We are not alone.
He is with us always.
We are not separate from God.
Yet.
And if He is here
and so am I,
then we're in it together!
Aren't we?
We also stopped wondering
how it could be
that if God is omniscient
and if all-knowing
is as inclusive as it sounds,
why do we wiggle
and squirm?
It's accountability, isn't it.
And we stopped liking that word

in the eighth grade
or soon thereafter.
Until we became parents.
We could pursue this
line of inquiry
ad infinitum.

But at this point you might be wondering if the rest of this book is going to continue looking like a poem your seventh grade teacher assigned you. You know, the kind that doesn't rhyme, but it looks like a house, or a tree, or a waterfall. And it goes on, and on, and on. Like eternity.